



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
New Orleans District

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Public comment requested by Corps on wetlands rebuilding at Mississippi's mouth

*Public meeting Tuesday, May 15 in Buras for comment
on environmental impact statement for West Bay project*

NEW ORLEANS – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will hold a public meeting Tuesday, May 15, on a proposal to restore wetlands in lower Plaquemines Parish by diverting sediment-laden Mississippi River water.

The public meeting will be held in Buras, 7:30 p.m., at the Buras Volunteer Fire Department, 35410 Highway 11.

The purpose of the meeting is to gather public comment on the Corps' 169-page draft environmental impact statement (EIS) for the proposed West Bay Sediment Diversion Project.

Comment cards will be distributed before the meeting. Oral comment will be received on a first-come, first-serve basis.

The Corps will build the \$22-million project under the Coastal Wetlands, Planning, Protection and Restoration Act, also known as the Breaux Act.

The West Bay project's objective is to create 9,831 acres of vegetated wetlands where today there is open water.

This would be accomplished by large-scale, uncontrolled diversion of Mississippi River water and its sediment load into West Bay, now a shallow arm of the Gulf of Mexico, six miles downriver from Venice (90 river miles below New Orleans).

There would be two phases:

✍ ✍ Construction of an interim channel to divert 20,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water at the average river stage (height above sea level).

✍ ✍ Enlarging the channel later for full-scale diversion at 50,000 cfs at the average river stage. This means that less water would be diverted at lower stages, and more at higher stages.

Intensive monitoring of the diversion would be done before cutting the larger channel. A relatively small amount of riverbank and adjacent wetlands would be excavated to build the diversion channel.

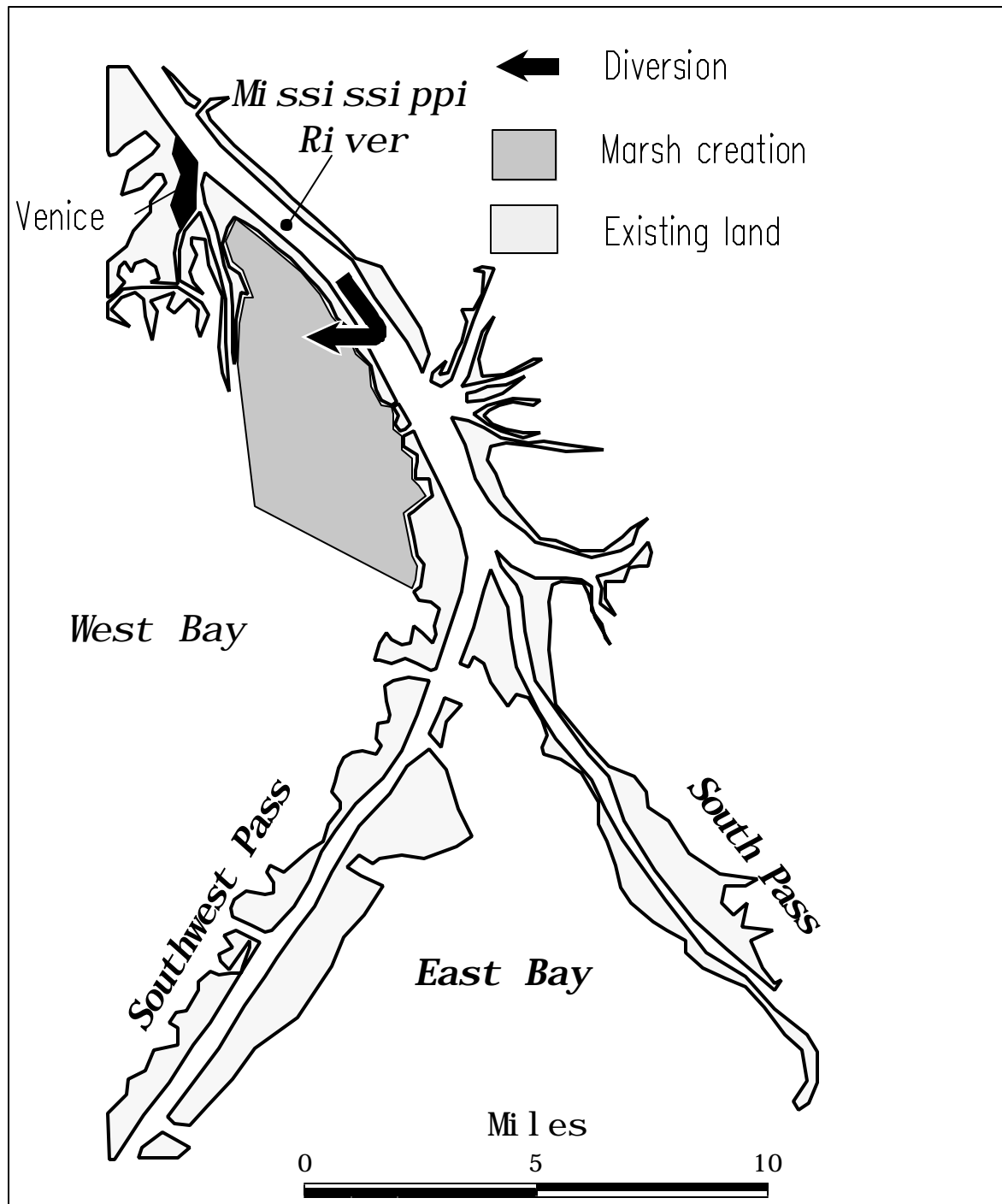
The Corps will also accept written comments postmarked by May 29, 2001. Mail to Sean Mickal; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Environmental Planning and Compliance Branch; CEMVN-PM-RS; P.O. Box 60267; New Orleans, LA. Email to sean.p.mickal@mvn02.usace.army.mil. Fax to 504-862-2572. And telephone Mickal at 504-862-2319.

A copy of the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be provided upon request.

MAP ATTACHED of West Bay Sediment Diversion Project, including Venice and mouths of the Mississippi River.

WEST BAY SEDIMENT DIVERSION U. S. Army Corps of Engineers

A Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act project



Sean Mickal, New Orleans District

